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TAGS: [SENV](#) [ECON](#) [PARM](#) [ENERG](#) [KNNP](#) [TRGY](#) [FR](#) [TW](#)  
SUBJECT: TAIWAN RESPONSE TO ADVANCED REACTOR RESEARCH  
INQUIRY

REF: A. STATE 103610  
[1](#)B. TAIPEI 1077  
[1](#)C. TAIPEI 487

Classified By: Deputy Director Eric Madison for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

- [1](#)1. (U) This message is a response to Ref A action request.
- [1](#)2. (C) SUMMARY: Taiwan has no official programs in the field of advanced nuclear reactor research, and nuclear officials here are cool to the prospects of Generation IV reactor technology to play any role in Taiwan's nuclear industry for at least the next twenty years. However, National Tsing-Hua University has been carrying out Generation IV research programs on the Molten Salt Reactor and Very High Temperature Reactor for approximately one year now through a budget funded by the National Science Council. Nuclear officials believe the true value of the Tsing-Hua program is to provide training for the island's next generation of nuclear engineers. These same officials were pleased with the results of Taiwan's 2009 National Energy Conference, which they feel ensured nuclear power would continue to play an important role in meeting Taiwan's energy needs. END SUMMARY.
- [1](#)3. (C) ESTH officers met with Atomic Energy Council Planning Director David Yao and International Affairs Section Chief Jec-Kong Goe to discuss Ref A points on Taiwan's interest in advanced nuclear reactor research and the nuclear research aspects of Taiwan's April 2009 National Energy Conference. On the first point, Yao noted the Taiwan authorities have issued "no policy guidance or strategic goals" on the establishment of advanced nuclear power technology in Taiwan, and all of the island's research on advanced (i.e., Generation IV) reactors is thus being carried out by National Tsing-Hua University. Current research activities at Tsing-Hua include projects related to the Molten Salt Reactor (MSR) and Very High Temperature Reactor (VHTR). Tsing-Hua's MSR research was initiated by the university's former president Frank Shu and is only in its first year, according to Yao, with an annual budget of roughly USD 650,000 from the National Science Council. A new budget request to continue funding for 2010 has been submitted. Yao doubted any of the Generation IV research would yield practicable results for Taiwan, but said the value of such research is to provide training for Taiwan's next generation of nuclear engineers.

14. (C) Yao did not suggest U.S.-Taiwan cooperation on Generation IV research, and predicted Taiwan would continue using Generation III or III-Plus reactor technology for at least the next twenty years. He stated the Institute of Nuclear Energy Research (INER) has no research projects related to Generation IV technology underway or planned either solely or in cooperation with any other entities. Instead, INER's major research projects for 2009-1012 include: development and application of nuclear facility decommissioning and radwaste management technologies, research into environmental plasma technologies, radioactive pharmaceutical science development, establishment of a high-concentration photovoltaic R&D center, development of advanced nuclear safety regulatory technology, platform set-up for nuclear technology industrialization, and other projects related to alternative energy, carbon capture, and radiopharmaceuticals. Both Yao and Gane said they would prepare a presentation outlining in more detail Taiwan's position on Generation IV research, specifically with regards to MSR and VHTR, and would welcome the opportunity to further discuss this issue with U.S. counterparts during the October 26-27 Joint Standing Committee Meeting on Civil Nuclear Cooperation in Kaohsiung.

15. (C) On the second point, related to the April 2009 National Energy Conference, Yao said AEC was pleased with the results. Although objections to nuclear power from civil society groups allowed for only four relatively anodyne points of consensus on nuclear issues to emerge from the conference, former Premier Liu Chao-Shiuan stated nuclear power had a certain future in Taiwan, as it would help reduce

greenhouse gas emissions and create a "low-carbon society." Subsequently, the Executive Yuan in July approved an "Action Plan for the Conclusions of the 2009 National Energy Conference," which included a program to assess "reasonable uses" of nuclear power in Taiwan and also the four consensus points reached at the conference, including directives to ensure plant safety, improve public oversight, identify nuclear issues of public concern, and strengthen the training of nuclear professionals. Yao added he expected no changes to Taiwan's nuclear policy or direction under new Premier Wu Den-yih.

16. (C) Separately, ESTH officer raised the issue noted in Ref B, regarding France's request for U.S. assistance to resolve the stalled tender for French industrial conglomerate AREVA to reprocess 292 tons of spent nuclear fuel currently located in Taiwan's Chinshan Nuclear Power Plant. Director Yao stated he understood the U.S. position clearly, that it was not in the scope of U.S. responsibilities to provide assistance in this case. Yao noted he has already shared the U.S. position with AREVA, but not with anyone from the French Institute in Taipei (FIT), and he believed AREVA understood clearly why its bid was not approved by the Taiwan authorities. Yao added he was unaware of the disconnect between AREVA and FIT, and would gladly give FIT representatives the same explanation he gave to AREVA, should the opportunity arise.

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